

MRS Western Meeting
Marion YMCA
January 27, 2006

Counties Present: Ashe, Burke, Catawba, Cleveland, Iredell, Jackson, Lincoln, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford.

Introductions

Updates from Raleigh

Training

Data talked about MRS2 and training for new counties

Intake/Screening

What cases are sent to Investigation track and why/where are you in the implementation process?

Your questions

Training

Cornerstone A vs B

- If workers will be doing family assessments need to go to Cornerstone A. What about people do occasional on call? Holly says use your best judgment how occasional is occasional? The two trainings are the same for the first two days, but the scenarios that they train with are different for A and B.

NSCU Facilitator Opportunity

- Facilitation Support Program the same people that will help you with your facilitation (at no charge) have a Facilitation Support Program. It will need quarterly and talk about facilitation issues.

Policy Trainings

- Will have about 3 more policy training 3 in March, 3 in May (3/8 the only one set up as of yet) One in Burke, Cumberland. When she has finalized the dates, Holly will send them out on the email list.

Data

MRS2

- For the new counties, MRS2 will start on February 2. Did not make sense to roll out less than a month before the changes to the central registry.
- Please check the email for instructions as to how to use MRS2. Differences are significant for easing data entry (i.e. common edit where you can enter multiple children) so using it should be easy.

New counties

- New counties will not be responsible for entering until they have gone to the training and are doing family assessments.
- Asked all new counties to put someone on the email list and indicate if they felt they were ready for the training.

Mitchell

- Have done a presentation about MRS to the schools. She detected skepticism about it among the teachers but she only had 20 minutes to talk about the entire program.
- They are trying to take all possible cases as family assessment. Plan to cross-train workers so that they can do both forensic and family assessments.

Lincoln

- They were part of the second wave of MRS so they are doing it. When they started they jumped in all at once.
- They have no protocol for any cases that could be neglect that will automatically go forensic instead. They take the cases on case by case basis.

Catawba

- Have been doing some time.
- They started out by following policy as to which cases were forensic vs family assessments. However they have case by case exceptions some triggers are past history of non-compliance with the agency or threats to the child or social worker, but these are rare.

Burke

- Have finished with most training.
- Some concern with taking substance abuse as family assessment.
- Hired a facilitator and the community has been very supportive by offering buildings to meet in so that they do not have to have meetings at the DSS.
- Have educated the community, but still need to concentrate on the schools.
- Paid for the facilitator with county money that had been a counselor position. Will supplement it with IVE Waiver money.
- Have not done any family assessments yet. They have to talk within their agency some, may let them get their feet wet first.

Ashe

- Met with the schools at the first of the year. The head school social worker used to be with DSS so she gets it .
- The DSS board is also on board with MRS.
- Just hired a facilitator, she will be able to do meetings in the family s home if they so desire. This person is paid for by contract so they do not have to pay benefits, which is what the person wanted since they are retired. They will be flexible with how they fund this position because they recognize it as necessary and they may need a second one.
- Do CFT for all high and on case by case basis for moderate risk.

- Most substance abuse and domestic violence will be taken as family assessment.
- Are going to take drinking and driving with the child in the car as forensic.

Cleveland

- A lot of their workers have been surprised at how well MRS has gone.
- Started out following policy for what would be forensic and what would be family assessment. DV is on a case by case basis, although DV with extreme substance abuse will make them take it as investigative.
- They take injurious environment with a sexual predator in the home as forensic even if there is no indication that there is a sexual element in that particular case.
- They invited the schools to their Family Centered training so that they felt included.

Iredell

- Have been doing MRS for some time.
- Felt that they have been successful in educating the schools because recently there was a school social worker that did not feel that DSS was acting appropriately and she tried to get all the other school social workers to back her. Two senior school guidance counselors who got MRS stopped this and educated her.
- Potential for flight cases and immediate response cases are usually forensic.
- They identify at intake if Work First is already working with the family.
- Would like to be able to take some moral turpitude as family assessments.

Polk

- Sort of starting over.
- Have trained their day care coordinator as a facilitator.

McDowell

- Have put their toe in .
- Have trained 5 family assessors.
- They were going to start with minor allegations, and have taken three, but for a variety of reasons, they have all had to be switched to the forensic track.

Rutherford

- Have a committee of employees that bring MRS suggestion to management.
- Plan to train the whole agency in family centered practice.
- Have not done any family assessments yet weather issues prevented them from getting some policy training.

- Thinking that they will start by taking improper care as family assessments.

Other issues/topics

Substance Abuse

- Holly shared what Watauga has started doing. They had so many substance abuse cases with the meth situation there that they now take their substance abuse partners with them on intake.

Someone asked about confidentiality issues/legality with this policy.

- Holly thinks that they have permission forms, she recommends calling Watauga for information on how they do this.

Domestic Violence

- Remember that you can do these family assessment, but you should meet with the non-offending parent in private and ask how they would like you to handle it interview together or separately. This person is the one that has to live in the situation.
- Nash county has red dot system. If in the past the family has threatened someone at the agency they put a red dot on the file so that the in the future people will know.

Dependency does it have to be investigative assessment?

- No, at first it was that way, but since 2003 you can take it as family assessment.

Benefits of CFTs

- Catawba had a CFT without the family. It was between DSS and community agencies because they were so at odds with each other. It worked really well.
- Talk about them early and often. Many counties have had amazing success with them. Nash is doing a wonderful job if counties would like to talk to someone about them.

Perspective on issues with school social workers

- Some school social workers feel that they have already tried voluntary services and the family has not responded. They feel that they need DSS to give teeth to what they have already done.
- Holly pointed out that many outside agencies think that DSS has much more authority than we really do.

Coordinating with Law Enforcement (they often do not understand DSS policy)

- Tony is on a committee that is developing a state wide protocol that should be accepted by the NC Sheriff s Association and NC Police Chiefs on how to make a CPS report.
- Burke is going to sign up to speak at basic law enforcement classes at the community college.
- Tony said the state is trying to do the same thing at the Justice Academy.
- Recommended that counties talk to Pitt because they have a wonderful relationship with law enforcement.

Coordination with Work First

- Jackson and Catawba have them sit in on staffings, they coordinate the employment plan and the case plan, they are mandatory collaterals.
- Jackson is getting ready to start a process whereby when Work First gets a new case they will check to see if there is CPS involvement.
- Counties asked for the message to come from the top (state level) about the coordination. Higher than the CPRs because they have been doing it.
- Some of the questions asked showed the lack of knowledge about some other Work First services. Served as a reminder to talk to the Work First staff. There are a lot of things they can do for families besides just cutting a check.

Facilitators

- Suggestion is that if you can't hire someone, train as many people as possible. This will allow you to have several staff to choose from. You want to have the most unbiased facilitator as possible (although sometimes you cannot get someone who doesn't know the family).
- Many counties have used ministers. They can go to the Division training, there is not IVE requirement with that training.

Transferred cases

- If a case transfers from another county it has to stay on the same track the originating county started it on.

How do you deal with medically fragile children?

- Everyone said on a case by case basis

What if the parents aren't capable?

- CFTs are good to bring in other family members that may be able to help the children stay in the family.

Cases involving child on child sexual contact and non verbal children with suspicious bruises where there is no identified perpetrator.

- Tony reported that local Child Advocacy Institutes will want you to take these cases as forensic. This was a topic of discussion at all 3 meetings several months ago and the overwhelming majority of counties wanted the decision left up to the DSS on a case by case basis.
- Need to be prepared to respond to this.

MRS Learning Institute this year

- Will be April 19-21 this year in New Bern.